R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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INQUIRY INTO CHANGE--SURVEY OF BELIEFS (SURVEY FORM I).
SUPPLEMENT TO "ENVISIONING A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL."
UNIVERSITY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, MO.

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DESCRIPTORS- *STATISTICAL SURVEYS, *EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, *EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES, ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, TEACHERS, SELF CONTAINED CLASSROOMS, SOCIAL STUDIES, INDIVIDUAL STUDY, GROUPING PROCEDURES, READINESS (MENTAL), DISCOVERY PROCESSES, CONCEPT FORMATION, COOPERATIVE PLANNING, MOTIVATION, UNGRADED CURRICULUM, PERCEPTION TESTS, PERCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT, COGNITIVE PROCESSES, ATTITUDES,

THIS IS A REPORT OF THE RESPONSES OF 480 PROFESSIONALS TO A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT EDUCATION AS RELATED TO NEWER GOALS IN EDUCATION. IT INDICATES A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE NEWER GOALS. (DD)

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INQUIRY INTO CHANGE

SURVEY OF BELIEFS
(Survey Form I)

Supplement to
ENVISIONING A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF UNIVERSITY CITY
University City, Missouri

April 1966

RC 000 880

INQUIRY INTO CHANGE

A SURVEY OF BELIEFS
(Survey Form I)

In December 1965, nearly the entire staff of University City schools took part anonymously in a survey of beliefs about education. This investigation was part of a larger study to identify newer goals as guidelines in providing more effective education for children in the years to come. The participants were asked to indicate on a five point scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of twenty statements as illustrated:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	B	C	D	E

Strongly Disagree . . . . Strongly Agree

SAMPLE:

It is better that a child talk too much than not at all. A B C (D) E

In order to summarize the results numerically, the letters A to E were given the values 1 to 5 respectively. When treated statistically the average ratings were interpreted as:

1.0 to 1.7 = A, Strongly disagree
1.8 to 2.5 = B, Disagree
2.6 to 3.3 = C, Neither agree or disagree
3.4 to 4.1 = D, Agree
4.2 to 5.0 = E, Strongly agree

This procedure was used to indicate the average rating of each group of participants and of the staff as a whole on each of the twenty statements.

The report includes the reactions of:

158	Elementary teachers
192	Secondary teachers
13	Principals, other administrators
33	Coordinators, resource teachers, other specialists
8	Social workers, nurses
76	Secretaries, aides
480	Total

The responses to each statement reveal interesting similarities, differences, and ranges in the strength of belief expressed by the various groups of participants. The following example illustrates one way of examining the findings:

Statement 1: "A student's personal feelings and attitude towards learning are more important than the amount of prescribed subject matter he learns." (See page 3.)

The range of average ratings from 4.1 to 4.7 shows that each group "agrees" or "strongly agrees" with this point of view. The small range, 0.6 points on the scale, also suggests consensus among the participants.

The ratings by elementary and secondary teachers are relatively close, 4.3 and 4.1 respectively; that of consultants, 4.4, is only slightly higher.

The ratings of social workers and nurses, and of secretaries and aides, 4.1, are the same as those of the secondary teachers.

Principals' ratings indicate the strongest commitment with the highest rating, 4.7.

The median rating for all groups combined was 4.2.

Each of the twenty statements can be examined in this manner.

INDICATIONS OF BELIEFS

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Strongly Disagree		. . . .		Strongly Agree	
1. A student's personal feelings and attitude toward learning are more important than the amount of prescribed subject matter he learns.					4.3	Elem. Teachers
				4.1		Sec. Teachers
					4.7	Prin., Admin.
					4.4	Coor., Special.
				4.1		Social W., Nurse
				4.1		Secretary, Aide
					4.2	MEDIAN
2. Other factors being equal, three self-contained classrooms, each having one teacher and 28 students, is a better educational arrangement for children than one in which three teachers share the responsibility for the education of 84 students.			3.0			Elem. Teachers
			2.7			Sec. Teachers
		2.1				Prin., Admin.
		2.5				Coor., Special.
			3.0			Social W., Nurse
			3.2			Secretary, Aide
			2.9			MEDIAN
3. A more important goal of social studies is to teach past and present information about our country rather than to teach children to solve problems which may arise in a society whose nature we cannot accurately predict.		2.1				Elem. Teachers
		2.2				Sec. Teachers
	.4					Prin., Admin.
		1.9				Coor., Special.
		2.4				Social W., Nurse
			2.6			Secretary, Aide
		2.2				MEDIAN
4. Individual and group responsibility can be developed more effectively if students frequently choose how they will use their time (library research, reading, discussion, for example) rather than always being under the direct supervision of a teacher.				4.1		Elem. Teachers
				3.8		Sec. Teachers
					4.2	Prin., Admin..
					4.3	Coor., Special.
				3.8		Social W., Nurse
				3.8		Secretary, Aide
				4.0		MEDIAN

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Strongly Disagree		. . .		Strongly Agree	
5. Recognizing the extent of change and the level of progress in the University City school system the last few years, it is more important that we now make major changes in our organizational structure, curriculum, and teaching methods than to consolidate the gains that we have already made.			3.2			Elem. Teachers
			3.1			Sec. Teachers
			.	3.8		Prin., Admin.
			3.2			Coor., Special.
			2.8			Social W., Nurse
			3.1			Secretary, Aide
			3.2			MEDIAN
6. Since readiness comes with maturity and little can be done to hasten it, effort spent in diagnosing and training for readiness is largely wasted.		1.8				Elem. Teachers
		2.3				Sec. Teachers
	1.7					Prin., Admin.
	1.7					Coor., Special.
		2.1				Social W., Nurse
		2.0				Secretary, Aide
		1.9				MEDIAN
7. A more effective educational program will result when most activities revolve around regular assignments from a single textbook than when students are expected to find and explore new resources and materials for themselves.	1.7					Elem. Teachers
		2.0				Sec. Teachers
	1.2					Prin., Admin.
	1.6					Coor., Special.
	1.6					Social W., Nurse
		1.9				Secretary, Aide
	1.7					MEDIAN
8. Children learn more when teachers, students, and aides are frequently regrouped to fit a specific learning situation than when a single grouping criterion (such as IQ, achievement, or heterogeneity) is used exclusively.				4.1		Elem. Teachers
				3.9		Sec. Teachers
					4.4	Prin., Admin.
				4.0		Coor., Special.
				3.9		Social W., Nurse
				4.0		Secretary, Aide
				4.0		MEDIAN

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
9. It is more important to provide the maximum amount of factual information to students than to teach them the processes by which facts can be discovered.	1.7					Elem. Teachers
		1.8				Sec. Teachers
	1.4					Princ., Admin.
	1.3					Coor., Special.
	1.4					Social W., Nurse
		1.9				Secretary, Aide
	1.6					MEDIAN
10. Until students have attained predetermined standards of achievement, they should not be promoted to the next grade or level.			2.7			Elem. Teachers
			2.9			Sec. Teachers
	1.4					Prin., Admin.
			2.6			Coor., Special.
			2.9			Social W., Nurse
			3.2			Secretary, Aide
			2.8			MEDIAN
11. Instructional personnel should be employed on a basis of the kind of person needed whether certificated or not rather than employing only certificated teachers at a ratio of one to twenty-six pupils.			3.1			Elem. Teachers
			3.2			Sec. Teachers
				3.6		Prin., Admin.
				3.6		Coor., Special.
				3.5		Social W., Nurse
				3.5		Secretary, Aide
				3.5		MEDIAN
12. It is more important to make sure students understand concepts, even though they do not complete as much academic work, than to cover all prescribed materials for their grade level.					4.4	Elem. Teachers
					4.2	Sec. Teachers
					4.7	Prin., Admin.
				4.1		Coor., Special.
					4.4	Social W., Nurse
					4.2	Secretary, Aide
					4.3	MEDIAN

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
13. Better guidelines for working with children are found in teaching practices of long standing than in research conducted in classroom settings.		2.4				Elem. Teachers
		2.4				Sec. Teachers
		2.0				Prin., Admin.
			2.7			Coor., Special.
		2.3				Social W., Nurse
		2.4				Secretary, Aide
		2.4				MEDIAN
14. The team concept of administration in which administrators, specialists, and coordinators work as a unit in making administrative decisions is more effective in dealing with the complexities of present education than an arrangement whereby the school building is operated as a semi-autonomous unit with the principal accepting individual responsibility for its operation.				3.7		Elem. Teachers
				3.7		Sec. Teachers
					4.5	Prin., Admin.
				3.7		Coor., Special.
					4.5	Social W., Nurse
				3.8		Secretary, Aide
				3.8		MEDIAN
15. Students may be more effectively motivated through marks, honors, and fear of failure than through exploration and discovery in certain aspects of a subject matter field.		2.1				Elem. Teachers
			2.6			Sec. Teachers
	1.3					Prin., Admin.
		1.9				Coor., Special.
		2.5				Social W., Nurse
		2.5				Secretary, Aide
		2.3				MEDIAN
16. More effective learning situations are possible when students proceed through a graded curriculum with their classmates than where each child moves at his own speed.		2.0				Elem. Teachers
		2.3				Sec. Teachers
	1.5					Prin., Admin.
		2.0				Coor., Special.
		2.1				Social W., Nurse
		2.3				Secretary, Aide
		2.1				MEDIAN

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
17. The educator who does not agree with new practices and innovations which are adopted district-wide should be allowed to operate according to his own best judgment rather than being forced to comply with the judgment of others with whom he cannot agree.		-	2.7			Elem. Teachers
			3.1			Sec. Teachers
		2.0				Prin., Admin.
			3.0			Coor., Special.
		2.1				Social W., Nurse
			2.6			Secretary, Aide
			2.7			MEDIAN
18. Since the intelligence levels of children are not fixed, much effort should be expended toward finding ways to develop perceptions and to extend intelligence.					4.2	Elem. Teachers
					4.2	Sec. Teachers
					4.5	Prin., Admin.
					4.2	Coor., Special.
					4.6	Social W., Nurse
					4.4	Secretary, Aide
					4.3	MEDIAN
19. Our present organization on the classroom level is as effective as we now know how to make it and few, if any, additional changes should be made.		2.0				Elem. Teachers
		2.0				Sec. Teachers
	1.4					Prin., Admin.
		2.0				Coor., Special.
		1.9				Social W., Nurse
		2.3				Secretary, Aide
		2.0				MEDIAN
20. The cognitive field theory of learning where a student uses all of his senses to gather data from which he draws conclusions is a better base for planning learning activities than the stimulus-response approach.				3.9		Elem. Teachers
				3.8		Sec. Teachers
					4.5	Prin., Admin.
				3.7		Coor., Special.
				3.4		Social W., Nurse
				3.6		Secretary, Aide
				3.8		MEDIAN

INTERPRETATION

The twenty statements in the survey are related to the newer goals in education which some schools in the nation are attempting to reach. Nine of the statements (numbers 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18, and 20) reflect desirable newer goals. Commitment to those goals is indicated by the ratings, "agree" and "strongly agree". Eleven statements (2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19) suggest conventional beliefs held in the past. Replies to these statements showing commitment to newer goals are indicated by the ratings "disagree" or "strongly disagree".

An examination of responses to individual statements shows the relative importance and degree of commitment of the staff as a whole to each of the newer goals. The reactions indicate STRONG COMMITMENT ("strongly agree" or "strongly disagree") to 4 statements, COMMITMENT ("agree" or "disagree") to 13 statements, and NO COMMITMENT ("neither agree or disagree") to 3 statements. Details are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The Degree of Staff Commitment to Each of Twenty Beliefs

STATEMENT (Condensed)	RATING
STRONG COMMITMENT	
Strongly Agree	
1. Students' feelings and attitudes more important than subject matter learned.	4.2
18. Effort should be spent in developing students' perceptions and intelligence since the level of intelligence is not fixed.	4.3
Strongly Disagree	
7. Regular assignments from single textbook more effective than students finding own resources.	1.7
9. Providing factual information more important than teaching processes.	1.6
COMMITMENT	
Agree	
4. Students' choice of activity more effective than direct supervision to develop responsibility.	4.0
8. Frequent regrouping for specific instruction preferable to grouping by I.Q., achievement, or hetergeneity.	4.0
11. Employment of kind of person needed more important than certification.	3.5
12. Students' understanding of concepts more important than covering prescribed curriculum.	4.3
14. Team concept of administration more effective than semi-autonomous operation of individual schools.	3.8
20. Cognitive field theory better base for planning learning activities than stimulus-response approach.	3.8

STATEMENT (Condensed)	RATING
Disagree	
3. Teaching about the past and present in social studies more important than teaching how to solve problems.	2.2
6. Effort spent in diagnosing and training for readiness is wasted since readiness comes with maturity.	1.9
13. Teaching practices of long standing better guidelines for working with children than research in classroom.	2.4
15. Marks, honors, fear of failure, more motivating to students than exploration and discovery.	2.3
16. Proceeding through graded curriculum more effective than student progressing at own speed.	2.1
17. Educator not agreeing with district-wide innovations should be allowed to use own judgment.	2.7
19. School organization by classroom level effective as is and few changes needed.	2.0
NO COMMITMENT	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	
2. Self-contained class better than cooperative teaching.	2.9
5. Continued change in organization, curriculum, and methods is more important than consolidating present gains.	3.2
10. Specific achievement standards necessary to promotion to higher grade level.	2.8

The degree of commitment to the twenty statements combined is summarized in Figure 1 for each group of participants and for the staff as a whole. In this analysis the higher the rating the stronger is the expression of commitment.

In general, the staff, exclusive of principals and other administrators, indicated "commitment" to newer goals in education by ratings of 3.7 to 3.9. The principals showed "strong commitment" by a 4.4 rating. A median rating of 3.9 was obtained for all participants combined.

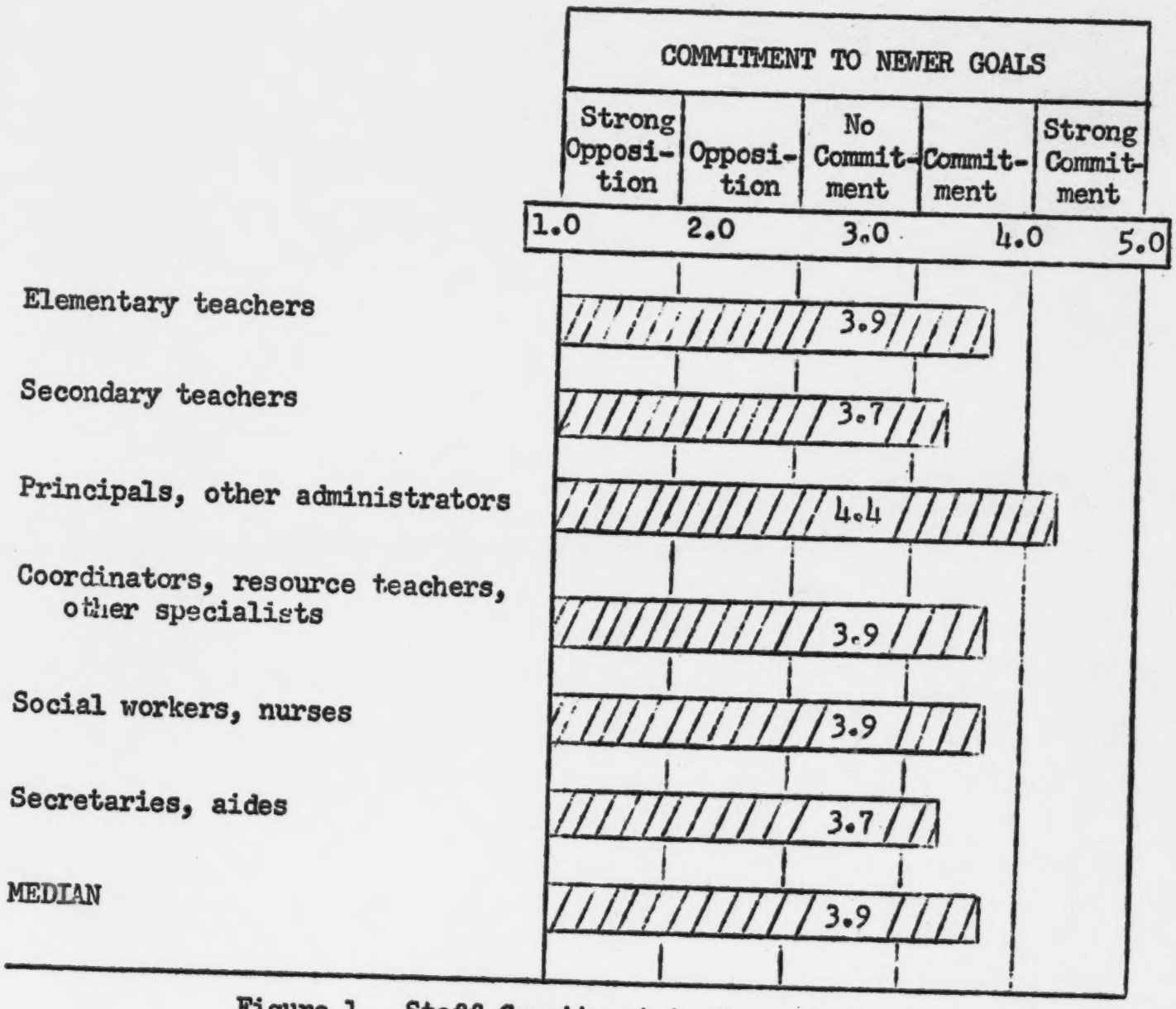

Figure 1. Staff Commitment to Newer Goals

SUMMARY

INQUIRY INTO CHANGE grew out of a staff prepared statement of purpose, philosophy, and goals entitled ENVISIONING A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL. The present survey is an attempt to assess some beliefs about education which the staff of University City schools holds to be important as it works towards newer goals in public education in the immediate years ahead. The preceding pages have summarized these beliefs.

The real value of a study of this kind lies not so much in the results themselves as in their application. As teachers, administrators, specialists, secretaries, and aides work toward newer goals, perhaps this report can be a useful take-off point in developing appropriate education which today's children will need if they are to become effective, functioning citizens in a world which, at this time, we cannot accurately predict.